1. **Mentor Training—**All HEROES Mentors receive a half-hour initial one-on-one orientation with the Retention Project coordinator. The first part of the orientation is spent reviewing the six-page HEROES mentor handbook, which includes an overview of program goals and information about the role of the mentor. Through the manual, mentors are introduced to the timeline of their work with the HEROES Program (being matched, establishing regular contact and developing a relationship, closure) as well as information on HEROES Program policies, the limits of what a mentor should be expected to do, and tips on establishing boundaries and a positive relationship with their mentees. The second half of the orientation is a discussion which gives the mentor a chance to reflect on the role other people have played in his or her own past achievement and what information would have been helpful to have when they started taking college classes. The intent of the orientation is to clarify the expectations the mentor has for the experience and to provide basic tools they can use to begin working in the program. All seven mentors currently active in the HEROES Program have received this training prior to being matched with mentees. An in-service, group training focusing on skills for effective mentoring practices and partnership building is planned for February, when mentors will be able to bring their early experiences with mentees to a more in-depth training and discussion.

2. **Mentee Site(s)/Community Partnerships—**As a campus-based peer to peer program, HEROES currently sources all of its mentees from the ESL and GED/ABE programs at Shoreline Community College. Work is underway to establish a partnership with Career Education Options (CEO), a high school completion program that helps students succeed in college classes as a means of high school completion. It is expected that this partnership will provide a source for both mentors and mentees. The HEROES Program is also collaborating with SCC’s Center for Service Learning to develop a system that would allow mentors to use their work in the HEROES Program to fulfill the Service Learning requirements of some classes.

3. **Successes—** The faculty and staff of the ESL/GED/ABE program at Shoreline have been extremely supportive of the project and willing to give me time to talk about the HEROES Program during meetings and in their classes. The program has also benefited from having two dedicated advisors serving the ESL/GED/ABE student population, who are able to connect students to the program during advising appointments and in classroom visits. The idea of peer mentoring seems to easily catch the imagination of the campus, especially since the HEROES Program allows mentors to connect with pre-college level students who may be facing similar challenges to what they faced themselves. An announcement I put SCC’s “Day at a Glance” event digest at the beginning of Winter quarter was picked up by the Marketing and Outreach office and posted to the college’s Facebook and Twitter pages, which recruited a new mentor within 10 minutes of the postings. Interest in the program by potential volunteer mentors has been strong considering the competing demands adult learners often have on their time, and the recruited mentors have a high level of interest in the program and serving other students.

4. **Challenges—** Mentee recruitment has been more difficult than mentor recruitment. This has been a challenge both in terms of signing on individual mentees but also in trying to spread the message on campus. While faculty and staff are quickly inspired by a chance for students to serve others on campus, it has been a challenge to present our mentee recruitment needs in a way that resonates with the community. As our outreach efforts reach more people, awareness of both aspects of the program is rising. We are also in the process of redesigning the application procedure for mentees, which will aim to make the program more accessible and eliminate the lag between the time when students express their interest in the program and when they enroll.

As a fellow Americorps-run WACC program, the SCC Center for Service Learning is a natural partner on campus, and potentially a great source for mentor recruitment, as all students enrolled in one of the 15 class sections that incorporate Service Learning are required to complete 15 hours of service work outside the classroom before the 8th week of the quarter. On-campus service opportunities are limited and sought after, which could make the HEROES Program an attractive option for students. Work still needs to be done, though, to make this collaboration viable. The biggest challenge is that the HEROES Program is not currently operating at a capacity that would allow mentors to be matched with mentees and begin their work quickly enough to reach their hours requirements by the 8th week deadline. Before working with volunteers whose academic success of failure rides on their ability work as a mentor, we will also have to develop plans to address issues that could arise in a project as variable as mentoring. Backup plans will have to be in place to ensure the mentor will still be able to meet hours requirements even if one or more of their mentees were to end their involvement, and all plans for service will have to meet the requirements of the course syllabi. This quarter, the HEROES Program lost two mentors because of their Service Learning obligations, so it is crucial that we find a way to use this resource to our advantage.

**5. Activities Related to Engaging Students in Communities—** For Make a Difference Day, I partnered with Edmonds Community College’s LEAF School and two high school completion programs at Shoreline, Career Education Options and Learning Center North. Seven CEO and LCN students, along with their instructor, came out on a Saturday to work with students in Edmond’s LEAF School program to convert an underused park near the EDCC campus into an ethnobotanical garden showcasing native species. The event was well attended by volunteers, so students were able to see substantial progress in the site by the end of the four-hour work party. Native American tribal members and the granddaughter of the family who originally donated the property to the city were present to share the natural history of the site and illustrate the significance of the restoration. The students who served had a chance to meet and work alongside students from a neighboring community college and benefit from the knowledge those students had gained in the LEAF School, which, as a mentoring program rooted in academics, emphasizes students sharing and testing what they have learned. Finding a Shoreline faculty member who was willing to involve her classes, arrange transportation, and offer extra credit to those who participated eliminated several logistical and psychological barriers, making it easy for students to serve. As for myself, I appreciated the chance to support other Retention Project Members and learn from their coordination of the service project prior to organizing my own.

**6. Activities Related to Ensuring a Brighter Future for Youth**

Only an estimated 15% of students are able to transfer to pre-college and college-level classes after completing an ESL or GED program. ESL and GED students face multiple barriers to continued success, many of which are related to a lack of information or understanding of academic and career pathways and limited use of the support systems available to them. The HEROES Program aims to address this problem by supplementing the work of faculty advisors with peer mentors who will be able to directly relate their own experience as students to the barriers and concerns their mentee may be facing. Mentors will be able to help connect ESL and GED students with needed resources on campus and in the community as well as provide support and encouragement from a peer perspective. Because most mentors are students who have themselves transitioned from an ESL or GED program relatively recently, these students, though already achieving academic success, also stand to benefit from the increased awareness of available resources and from reflecting on their own experience and knowledge base during conversation with their mentees.

**7. Great Stories—** The HEROES Program hasn’t begun reaching mentees, but I am already getting stories of positive impact on mentors. One mentor completed his GED last fall and is now enrolled in Shoreline’s Music Technology program. Though he earned a near-perfect score on his GED tests, he was apprehensive about returning to school after 10 years away and seriously considered withdrawing from his Winter quarter classes before they started. During his mentor orientation at the beginning of the quarter, he told me that one significant factor in his decision to go through with his plans for starting college was the prospect of mentoring another student through the transitional process he had just been through.